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Jeffrey Rathke 12/08/2006 02:14:42 PM From DB/Inbox: Jeffrey Rathke

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [AID](#) [ECON](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [GM](#)
SUBJECT: GETTING MORE FROM GERMANY ON AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission John M. Koenig for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: Germany remains a key partner in Afghanistan and Chancellor Merkel is committed to succeeding, but we need to find new ways to increase German resolve and resources. Post believes the Germans can do more in the near term in many of the key areas Embassy Kabul has identified in recent messages, such as police training, development assistance, and counter-narcotics. More military support might be possible in the longer term, but it would require engagement at the highest levels to strengthen Chancellor Merkel's personal investment in Afghanistan, as well as a renewed effort to convince the German public and parliament that NATO and the international community have an integrated strategy for success that is making progress. Germany's 2007 EU and G-8 presidencies present an opportunity now to redouble our efforts. End summary.

¶2. (S/NF) Chancellor Merkel is the key decision-maker on overall Afghanistan policy (Foreign Minister Steinmeier appears to be the other key voice). The pre-Riga debate over German military flexibility in northern Afghanistan made this clear, as the Chancellor repeatedly spoke out publicly to stress the limits of Germany's ISAF mandate, even as some other parts of the government (including within her chancellery staff) were considering ways Germany might do

more. A more forthcoming German position on Afghanistan will happen only if the Chancellor presses for it; we should engage accordingly and consider making use of the EU and G-8 summits to this end. Merkel has never visited Afghanistan as Chancellor, although the Afghanistan team at the chancellery has advocated a trip. A visit there -- especially if it were not confined only to the German-commanded northern region -- could increase Merkel's personal investment in success, her appreciation of the challenges, and perhaps her government's readiness to do more. We should do what we can to encourage a visit.

"Comprehensive Approach" Key for Germans

¶3. (S/NF) Merkel and her government pride themselves on their "comprehensive" policy in Afghanistan, fusing political, military, and development efforts in a "networked security" approach. Germans at times may need to be reminded that we also follow the concept; there is little in the German media about what the U.S. is doing there, other than militarily. In discussing Afghanistan with the Germans, we should agree with their concept but identify specific areas where the civilian effort is falling short, and ask them what they can do to help, especially on reconstruction and development, counternarcotics, and police training.

2007 Summit Opportunities

¶4. (S/NF) Germany will assume January 1 the presidencies of the EU (for six months) and G-8 (for twelve months); this presents an opportunity to leverage our strong relations to achieve greater commitment by other partners as well. Berlin is ready to address Afghanistan in both fora, urging EU consideration of an expanded ESDP police training role and raising the possibility of inviting Presidents Karzai and Musharraf to attend part of the June 6-8 G-8 Summit in Germany.

¶5. (S/NF) Merkel's team is particularly interested in a successful U.S.-EU summit in Washington this spring; we should use this desire to spur greater German activism and leadership on Afghanistan within the EU. The European Commission recently proposed an increase of 32 percent in EC assistance through its "Neighborhood Policy" (which does not include Afghanistan). We should explore whether Germany could seek similar increases in EC and member-state assistance to Afghanistan, which we could profile in the U.S.-EU summit.

¶6. (S/NF) Some German initiatives, such as hosting a late-January 2007 meeting of the G-8/Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) at the Political Director level, present opportunities but also pose the risk of showing the appearance of action without the substance. We should make clear to the Germans that we support their efforts and are ready to work with them in the expectation they will yield concrete results rather than a duplication of existing mechanisms.

Reconstruction/Development

¶7. (S/NF) Chancellor Merkel, in parrying suggestions that Germany is not pulling its weight in Afghanistan, has made a point of emphasizing that Germany is the lead provider of security in an area that is home to 40 percent of the Afghan population. We should use this rhetorical point to encourage greater German bilateral support for reconstruction and development. German aid to Afghanistan (including German payments through the EU) between 2002 and 2006 will amount to about 1.5 billion euro, compared to our announced 10.3 billion at the London Conference between FY 2001 and FY 2006. We should particularly encourage greater German civilian assistance in the south and east.

Military and Civilian Efforts

¶8. (S/NF) There is a widespread notion in Germany that ISAF (as well as OEF) operations in the south and east amount to an attempt to achieve a purely military solution. The strong public perception is that Germany is doing the "right" things in the north and the U.S., Canada, and the UK are doing the "wrong" things in the south and east. Chancellor Merkel and her government have done little to counteract this perception and at times have encouraged it. Our task is complicated by the possibility (supported by reporting in more sensitive channels) that some senior Afghan officials have offered this interpretation to German counterparts as well. The visit December 14 of the delegation led by SCA DAS John Gastright will be a valuable opportunity to help reverse these misperceptions. In particular, post recommends we focus to the extent we can publicly on progress in the east that demonstrates our own concerted effort in civilian and military areas.

¶9. (S/NF) In the short term, we expect Chancellor Merkel to stick to a strict interpretation of Germany's ISAF mandate, which allows German forces to support deployments outside the north and Kabul only temporarily and when absolutely necessary for fulfillment of the mission. As frustrating as we find this position, Germany has made tiny steps in the direction of more flexibility: German officials refused two months ago even to acknowledge their C-160 flights to Kandahar, fearing a negative public reaction (which never came). Now Merkel openly cites this support as evidence that Germany is not hunkered down exclusively in the north. We should continue to encourage Berlin to fill -- even if only temporarily -- ISAF shortfalls such as reconnaissance aircraft, UAVs, or MEDEVAC. Keeping up the pressure will help expand the public and official readiness to discuss increasing flexibility more generally.

¶10. (S/NF) In the longer term, we should work to surmount German caveats. The upcoming visit of to Washington of NSA Christoph Heusgen should leave him with a clear understanding of how we would like to see German policy develop. We should also focus on key German parliamentarians, who have indicated more creativity than Merkel's government on this issue. Senior Foreign Affairs Committee members have suggested that they could support a re-evaluation of Germany's posture -- and possibly raising the 3,000-troop ceiling by another 500 or 1,000 -- if it were part of an ISAF-wide re-evaluation of its requirements and if other Allies did their part. The Bundestag could possibly address the matter in conjunction with an early renewal of the ISAF mandate in the spring (which would be several months before the current mandate runs out in September 2007). An early renewal is a hotly debated topic within government security circles and would have to be approved by Merkel. Her decision would be the key, but the obstacle of public opinion would remain -- this would be an uphill battle for the government. Merkel has demonstrated that she is capable of this sort of leadership, however -- she orchestrated support for Germany's unprecedented UNIFIL deployment last summer, turning two-thirds public opposition into majority support over the course of several weeks.

Police Training and Counter-Narcotics

¶11. (S/NF) Germany has 40 police trainers in Afghanistan in its capacity as G-8 lead nation (compared to approximately 400 U.S./contract personnel in the USG police training effort). There is discussion of raising this perhaps to 50, but the MFA pins more hopes on the current EU fact-finding mission enabling a doubling of trainers -- but even that amount is modest. We continue to encourage Germany to find creative ways to put more police officials at federal government disposal, especially since the need for international police forces and trainers is only increasing, including in places like Kosovo. We should keep up this pressure, and make clear what we expect from Berlin in its EU Presidency role: it is not clear whether the additional European police officials that the Germans think might be

within reach would lead to a qualitative difference in the effort in Afghanistan.

¶12. (S/NF) The Germans have been cautious on counter-narcotics issues, fearing ill-will that could endanger their relatively small number of forces in places like Badakhshan. They adhere to their opposition to eradication and the need for alternative livelihoods. With indications of increased Afghan government commitment to implementing its counter-narcotics strategy, now is the time to stress with Berlin the importance of eradication this year in Badakhshan and the need for Germany to find ways to support all aspects of the CN program.

Comment

¶13. (S/NF) The Germans have done a lot in Afghanistan since ¶2002. In our discussions with them, we should recognize those contributions while underscoring that there is a difference between doing a lot and doing enough: it is the latter that we and the rest of the international community should strive for together. End comment.

¶14. (U) Post provides below a timeline of some key events in upcoming months in which increased commitment to Afghanistan could be advanced:

December 8: Visit of Foreign Minister Steinmeier to the U.S.

January 11-12 Meeting of U.S.-EU Political Directors (Dresden)

January 29 EU-Afghanistan troika meeting (Afghan attendee: FM Spanta) (Berlin)

January 30 Meeting of JCMB Political Directors (Berlin)

January 31 G-8 Political Directors (Berlin)

Mid-February EU-Pakistan troika meeting (Berlin).

TIMKEN JR